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IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1 and 15, and add new claims 17 and 18 as follows:

1 Claim 1. (currently amended) An information providing method for a
2 network, for providing, via a network, content that constitutes an entire
3 body of information based on conditions that are defined in advance,
4 comprising the steps of:

5 generating a finite number of intermediate contents for content that
6 corresponds to an entire body of information, wherein said intermediate
7 contents are hieratically structured according to information content;

8 selecting at least one of said intermediate contents and providing
9 information at a selected level.

1 Claim 2. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 1, wherein information contained in said content is employed as said
3 intermediate content.

1 Claim 3. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 2, wherein information obtained by changing at least a part of said
3 information included in said content is employed as said intermediate
4 content.

1 Claim 4. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 3, wherein a condition determined in accordance with a request from a
3 user is defined as said condition that is defined in advance.

1 Claim 5. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 4, wherein an intermediate content is selected at a level that
3 corresponds to said condition determined in accordance with said request
4 from said user.

1 Claim 6. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 5, wherein a condition for reducing or increasing the amount of
3 information in said content is defined as said condition that is defined in
4 advance.

1 Claim 7. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 6, wherein a condition for extracting an information type that
3 represents said content is employed as said condition determined in advance.

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1 Claim 8. (original) The information providing method according to
2 claim 7, wherein price information is provided for said contents, and
3 compensation information based on said price information is provided for
4 each of said intermediate contents at said levels that are generated.

1 Claim 9. (currently amended) An information providing apparatus
2 comprising:

3 storage means for storing content that constitutes an entire body of
4 information;

5 connection means for connecting said content to a network so as to
6 provide said content;

7 generation means for, based on a condition determined in advance,
8 generating intermediate contents at a finite number of levels relative to
9 said content, wherein said intermediate contents are hieratically structured
10 according to information content; and

11 output means for selecting and outputting at least one of said
12 intermediate contents.

1 Claim 10. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 9, wherein said generation means employs information included in said
3 content to generate intermediate contents at a finite number of levels.

1 Claim 11. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 10, wherein said generation means employs information obtained by
3 changing at least a part of the information included in said content to
4 generate intermediate contents at a finite number of levels.

1 Claim 12. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 11, wherein said generation means includes input means for receiving a
3 request from said user, and a condition designated in accordance with said
4 request is employed as said condition determined in advance.

1 Claim 13. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 12, wherein said output means selects an intermediate content at a
3 level that corresponds to said condition designated in accordance with said
4 request from said user.

1 Claim 14. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 11, wherein said generation means generates said intermediate contents

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3 by defining, as said condition determined in advance, a reduction or an
4 increase in the amount of information contained by said content.

1 Claim 15. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 14, wherein said generation means generates said intermediate contents
3 by defining, as said condition determined in advance, extraction of an
4 information type that represents said content.

1 Claim 16. (original) The information providing apparatus according to
2 claim 15, further comprising:

3 price storage means for storing said content in correlation of with
4 price information; and

5 compensation means for providing compensation information that is
6 based on said price information for each of said intermediate contents at
7 said levels that are generated.

1 Claim 17. (new) The information providing method according to claim 1,
2 further comprising associating a content price for each of the intermediate
3 contents based on their information content.

1 Claim 18. (new) The information providing apparatus according to claim
2 9, further comprising a price storage unit configured to associate a content
3 price for each of the intermediate contents based on their information
4 content.